Advanced Practice Trends 2012-2013
AN ATTITUDE & OUTLOOK REPORT ON NURSE PRACTITIONERS & PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS
Introduction

Major forces are at work propelling demand for nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other non-physician practitioners:

- The U.S. healthcare system is undergoing an epic transformation, opening what’s predicted to be a flood of additional medical consumers
- The Baby Boom generation has begun its consumption of greater amounts of medical care
- A shortage of primary care physicians looms
- Chronic diseases are increasing
- The complexity of care proliferates

Nurse practitioners and physician assistants are positioned to be a critically important player in responding to these converging trends. At the same time, factors such as state-to-state regulatory inconsistencies and doubt about advanced practitioner’s role threaten the expanded coverage opportunities they offer.

This report offers a snapshot of the attitudes and outlooks of nurse practitioners and physician assistants. As an organization placing advanced practitioners in healthcare facilities throughout the nation, Jackson Healthcare seeks to measure their attitudes annually and trend changes over the coming years.
Research Background

This survey was conducted online from November through December, 2012. Invitations for the survey were emailed to advanced practice providers who have been placed by Jackson Healthcare staffing companies and those who have not. While we understand that advanced practitioners include nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurse mid-wives, CRNAs, clinical nurse specialists and other advanced specialties, this report is focused on trends with nurse practitioners and physicians assistants.

Respondents were self-selected with 395 respondents completing the survey. The error range for this survey at the 95th percent confidence level is +/- 5.0 percent.

Topics surveyed and included in this report:

- Employment demographics
- Career and retirement plans
- Overall job satisfaction and drivers of satisfaction
- Preferred work environment
- Threats to job satisfaction & growth
- Duties & roles
A Snapshot of Survey Findings

1. Job satisfaction is high among NPs & PAs

2. Workload and duties are increasing, posing threats to profession

3. Demand for NPs & PAs expected to remain strong
Part 1: Job Satisfaction & Workload.

Overall, nurse practitioners and physician assistants are satisfied with their jobs. Seventy-four percent of survey respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their current work environment. Only five percent reported being very dissatisfied.

The top five drivers of NP and PA satisfaction:
The top five drivers of NP and PA dissatisfaction:

- **Supervisor/management**: 27%
- **Don’t feel valued**: 22%
- **Salary**: 19%
- **Support staff**: 13%
- **Physician attitude**: 11%

**Workload**
Nurse practitioners and physician assistants report seeing between 16 and 18 patients per day, on average. However, this number is increasing and advanced practice providers are being asked to take on more responsibility.

**Changes in Workload**

- **Patient Load**: Increased
- **Overtime Hours**: Stayed the Same
- **Duties Required**: Increased

Fifty-nine percent reported that overtime hours have remained the same in the past year, while 30 percent reported an increase in the number of overtime hours worked. Half of all respondents reported an increase in their patient load over the past year. And the duties of 49 percent increased in that time.
Part 2: Preferences

The top three qualities nurse practitioners and physician assistants seek in a work assignment include work/life balance (59 percent), pay (57 percent) and control over schedule (34 percent).

Other qualities valued by non-physician providers include friendliness, location, independence, training and working in a team environment.
Work Environment

Physician assistants are more often located in hospital settings, while nurse practitioners more often work in clinic or office settings.

The top five work settings of respondents:

- **53%**: Office-based setting/clinic/practice
- **20%**: Hospital
- **9%**: Government (Veterans Administration, Military, Indian Health, Corrections)
- **4%**: Outpatient surgery center
- **3%**: Mental health facility/nursing home

Other work environments listed included home health, academic and retail clinic.

The number of physicians with whom nurse practitioners and physician assistants work varies considerably and is connected to their workplace environment.
Part 3: Career Outlook & Future Risks

The vast majority of nurse practitioners and physician assistants surveyed (83 percent) will continue in their role as advanced practice providers through 2013. However, the population is aging.

Forty percent of nurse practitioners and 31 percent of physician assistants are 55 years of age or older.

According to survey respondents, 40 percent plan to retire within the next 10 years and the majority (60 percent of nurse practitioners and 47 percent of physician assistants) plan to retire within the next 15 years.
Future of the Profession

Forty-seven percent of respondents foresee risks to the nurse practitioner role and 32 percent anticipate risks to the physician assistant role.

### Do You Foresee Risks to NP Profession?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backlash from other providers trying to protect their role/competition from other providers</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased medical malpractice liability</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased workload/limited amount of time to spend with each patient</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreasing/limited reimbursement</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rush to educate NPs results in a less skilled provider/not enough clinical experience</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictions on role from medical board, insurance companies &amp; pharmacy/increased regulations</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not valued/still seen as a “nurse”</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will be asked/forced to practice outside their scope/see higher acuity patients</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less collaboration from physicians</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No nationwide standards for role</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards of care/protocols too restrictive</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will be marginalized to family practice role/discouraged from specializing</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For nurse practitioners, physician backlash, increased medical malpractice liability and increasing workload loom. For physician assistants, the need for physician oversight and increased medical liability are key concerns.

Respondents see the nurse practitioner role evolving to assume more responsibility in patient care, especially primary care. Physician assistants will continue to specialize and, like nurse practitioners, demand for them is expected to increase.
Do You Foresee Risks to PA Profession?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will be held back by the need for oversight from a physician</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same risks as NP</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased medical malpractice liability</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More patients in less time</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition from other providers (including NPs)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreasing/limited reimbursement</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased need for them</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will be asked to practice outside their scope</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less collaboration from physicians</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher acuity, more difficult patients</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance of their roles/role confusion</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32% Yes, 68% No
Survey Demographics

**Work Data**
n = 490 - 430

**Work Status**
- Full Time: 83%
- Part Time: 17%

**Locum Tenens?**
- Would Consider: 64%
- No: 22%
- Yes: 14%

**Work Setting**
n = 492

- Practice/clinic/office-based setting: 53%
- Hospital: 20%
- Government (VA, Indian Health Services, Military, Corrections): 9%
- Outpatient surgery center/urgent care facility: 4%
- Mental health facility: 3%
- Nursing home, assisted living, long-term care facility: 3%
- Home health: 2%
- Academic: 2%
- Retail clinic: 1%
- All others: 4%
**Specialty**
n = 408

- NP: 73%
- PA: 22%
- Other: 5%

### Specialty

- Family Practice: 37%
- Psychiatry: 9%
- Ob/Gyn: 6%
- Emergency Medicine: 6%
- Internal Medicine: 5%
- Pediatrics: 5%
- Geriatrics: 4%
- Hospitalist: 3%
- Urgent Care/Ambulatory Care: 4%
- Dermatology: 2%
- Cardiology: 2%
- Surgery (general and subspecialty): 5%
- Infectious Diseases: 2%
- Other Internal Medicine Subspecialties: 5%
- Occupational Medicine: 1%
- Pain Management: 1%

**Geography**
n = 396

- Rural: 31%
- Urban: 34%
- Suburban: 35%

### Geography

- Southeast: 30%
- Northeast: 23%
- Midwest: 21%
- Southwest: 14%
- West: 13%
**Education**

*n = 395 - 403*

**Highest Level of Education**

- Associate’s Degree: 1%
- Bachelor’s Degree: 10%
- Master’s Degree: 80%
- Doctoral Degree: 9%

**Plans to Further Education**

- Yes: 42%
- No: 58%

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**Length of Time in Practice**

*n = 397*

Total Years Practicing:

- 30+:
- 25-29:
- 20-24:
- 15-19:
- 10-9:
- 1-4:
- <1:

% of Respondents:

- 0 5 10 15 20 25 30
Age and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-44</th>
<th>45-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
More Jackson Healthcare Research
Here are other national research reports released in 2012:

A Tough Time for Physicians
2012 Medical Practice & Attitude Report

Nurses & Non-patient Care
2011 Summary of Findings

Trend Watch:
Physician Acquisition

Want to get future survey reports?

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